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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/713,215	11/17/2003	Tae-Wan Kim	249/392	2486

7590 05/04/2006

LEE & STERBA, P.C.
1101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 2000
Arlington, VA 22209

EXAMINER

BERNATZ, KEVIN M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1773

DATE MAILED: 05/04/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

5

Advisory Action Before the Filing of an Appeal Brief	Application No. 10/713,215	Applicant(s) KIM ET AL.	
	Examiner Kevin M. Bernatz	Art Unit 1773	

--The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

THE REPLY FILED 10 April 2006 FAILS TO PLACE THIS APPLICATION IN CONDITION FOR ALLOWANCE.

1. ☒ The reply was filed after a final rejection, but prior to or on the same day as filing a Notice of Appeal. To avoid abandonment of this application, applicant must timely file one of the following replies: (1) an amendment, affidavit, or other evidence, which places the application in condition for allowance; (2) a Notice of Appeal (with appeal fee) in compliance with 37 CFR 41.31; or (3) a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.114. The reply must be filed within one of the following time periods:

- a) ☒ The period for reply expires 3 months from the mailing date of the final rejection.
 b) ☐ The period for reply expires on: (1) the mailing date of this Advisory Action, or (2) the date set forth in the final rejection, whichever is later. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of the final rejection.

Examiner Note: If box 1 is checked, check either box (a) or (b). ONLY CHECK BOX (b) WHEN THE FIRST REPLY WAS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE FINAL REJECTION. See MPEP 706.07(f).

Extensions of time may be obtained under 37 CFR 1.136(a). The date on which the petition under 37 CFR 1.136(a) and the appropriate extension fee have been filed is the date for purposes of determining the period of extension and the corresponding amount of the fee. The appropriate extension fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is calculated from: (1) the expiration date of the shortened statutory period for reply originally set in the final Office action; or (2) as set forth in (b) above, if checked. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of the final rejection, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

NOTICE OF APPEAL

2. ☐ The Notice of Appeal was filed on _____. A brief in compliance with 37 CFR 41.37 must be filed within two months of the date of filing the Notice of Appeal (37 CFR 41.37(a)), or any extension thereof (37 CFR 41.37(e)), to avoid dismissal of the appeal. Since a Notice of Appeal has been filed, any reply must be filed within the time period set forth in 37 CFR 41.37(a).

AMENDMENTS

3. ☒ The proposed amendment(s) filed after a final rejection, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because
 (a) ☒ They raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search (see NOTE below);
 (b) ☐ They raise the issue of new matter (see NOTE below);
 (c) ☐ They are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal; and/or
 (d) ☐ They present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.

NOTE: See Continuation Sheet. (See 37 CFR 1.116 and 41.33(a)).

4. ☐ The amendments are not in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121. See attached Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment (PTOL-324).
 5. ☐ Applicant's reply has overcome the following rejection(s): _____.
 6. ☐ Newly proposed or amended claim(s) _____ would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claim(s).
 7. ☒ For purposes of appeal, the proposed amendment(s): a) ☒ will not be entered, or b) ☐ will be entered and an explanation of how the new or amended claims would be rejected is provided below or appended.

The status of the claim(s) is (or will be) as follows:

Claim(s) allowed: none.

Claim(s) objected to: none.

Claim(s) rejected: 1,2 and 4-8.

Claim(s) withdrawn from consideration: none.

AFFIDAVIT OR OTHER EVIDENCE

8. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence filed after a final action, but before or on the date of filing a Notice of Appeal will not be entered because applicant failed to provide a showing of good and sufficient reasons why the affidavit or other evidence is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 1.116(e).
 9. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence filed after the date of filing a Notice of Appeal, but prior to the date of filing a brief, will not be entered because the affidavit or other evidence failed to overcome all rejections under appeal and/or appellant fails to provide a showing of good and sufficient reasons why it is necessary and was not earlier presented. See 37 CFR 41.33(d)(1).
 10. ☐ The affidavit or other evidence is entered. An explanation of the status of the claims after entry is below or attached.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION/OTHER

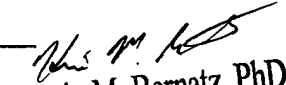
11. ☒ The request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because:

See Continuation Sheet.

12. ☐ Note the attached Information Disclosure Statement(s). (PTO/SB/08 or PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____

13. ☐ Other: _____

KMB
May 1, 2006


 Kevin M. Bernatz, PhD
 Primary Examiner

Continuation of 3. NOTE: the proposed amendment results in limitations that were not previously considered, and hence would require further search and/or consideration.

Continuation of 11. does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because: applicants' arguments are directed to the unentered amendment. In so far as they apply to the rejection of record, applicants argue that Hiramoto et al. fail to teach the improved MR ratio and low RA associated with the claimed process limitation. The Examiner respectfully disagrees.

First, the Examiner notes that Hiramoto et al. appears to teach the concept of surface nitriding the magnetic layer with nitrogen plasma (see Paragraphs 0089 and 0105 - 0112). Second, the Examiner notes that the amended language is a process limitation and the Examiner notes that process limitations are not further limiting in terms of the structure resulting from the claimed process. Specifically, in a product claim, as long as the prior art product meets the claimed structural limitations, the method by which the product is formed is not germane to the determination of patentability of the product unless an unobvious difference can be shown to result from the claimed process limitations. In the instant case, the "structure" resulting from the claimed process would be the existence of a layer comprising material of both the ferromagnetic layer and nitrogen.

Finally, applicant(s) are reminded that a detailed description of the reasons and evidence supporting a position of unexpected results must be provided by applicant(s). A mere pointing to data requiring the examiner to ferret out evidence of unexpected results is not sufficient to prove that the results would be truly unexpected to one of ordinary skill in the art. In re D'Ancicco, 439 F.2d 1244, 1248, 169 USPQ 303, 306 (1971) and In re Merck & Co, 800 F.2d 1091, 1099, 231 USPQ 375, 381 (Fed. Cir. 1986). It appears that applicants are alleging that the claimed process limitation results in an unobvious difference/improvement over the prior art. If this is the case, the Examiner deems that applicants have not met their burden to distinctly point out the full scope of the unexpected improvement, as well as reasons why the improvement is unobvious as compared to the closest prior art (i.e. the invention disclosed in Hiramoto et al.).